

**Marcus Clements**  
Head of Consumer Policy



Email:

27 May 2021

Nick Donovan  
Managing Director  
Northern Trains Ltd  
By Email

Dear Nick,

**Approval of Northern Trains Limited's (Northern's) Accessible Travel Policy (Condition 5 of the Station Licence and GB Statement of National Regulatory Conditions: Passenger)**

On 25 February 2021, I wrote to provide approval of Northern's draft Accessible Travel Policy (ATP).

Following that letter Northern requested an extension to the deadline for providing refresher training to all frontline staff from 31 July to 31 December 2021. We note that this is to enable the use 3-hour briefing sessions to deliver online training, something Northern developed following ORR's initial concerns about the plan to use only a remote e-learning programme. Whilst we are disappointed that the July deadline committed to in February cannot now be met, we grant this extension because of the additional value we believe face-to-face training will provide to staff and thereby the passenger experience. We will continue to monitor progress closely in the ATP quarterly meetings held with my team.

Northern has indicated that the final material to be used in these sessions, which in my letter of 25 February we asked to be provided by 19 March 2021, is a large online package. I shall be grateful if you will, **by 11 June 2021**, arrange for screenshots or equivalent documentation to be supplied to provide final assurance that this package meets our requirements, as indicated by the material already submitted to us, on which the package is based.

Subject to the submission of the requested material, I can reaffirm that Northern's ATP now meets the requirements of Condition 5 of its station licence and GB Statement of National Regulatory Conditions: Passenger (SNRP).

As noted in my letter of 25 February, Northern has indicated its intention to publish a separate scooter policy when services return to normal, and to providing online information about the availability of accessible taxis by April 2021. Northern indicated in the most recent ATP quarterly meeting that the intention is to provide the latter in the form of a map. I shall be grateful for an update on both these areas of work at the next ATP quarterly meeting.

We note that Northern has changed its contact centre opening times. Whilst passengers are able to book assistance up until 11pm the night before travel or for same day travel provide 6 hours' notice, I shall be grateful for confirmation that Northern has made an assessment of the impact of the move from a 24-hour contact centre on disabled travellers at the next ATP quarterly meeting.

A copy of the approved ATP will be published on our website along with a copy of this letter. Please provide either pdfs of Northern's station and rolling stock accessibility information or links to HTML webpages. The information provided in these must be accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date. Northern has indicated that station audits have been carried out and the information on National Rail Enquiries updated. I would welcome confirmation of this at the next ATP quarterly meeting.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Clements', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

**Marcus Clements**



NORTHERN

# Accessible Travel Policy



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## Commitments to providing assistance

Northern are committed to supporting everyone in the communities we serve- including older and disabled people, families with pushchairs and small children and those who need more time to board or alight, to use the railways confidently.

Northern strives to provide rail services which are accessible to all, so that customers can travel with confidence, safe in the knowledge that support is available at each stage of their journey, when needed.

Our commitment to supporting all customers, particularly older and disabled people to travel with confidence includes offering the following:

- assistance at our stations and our trains, or when making connections
- alternative accessible transport when our stations or trains are inaccessible
- clear, consistent and up-to-date customer information
- a range of discounts to reduce the cost of travel for disabled people and a companion

This document, our Accessible Travel Policy, sets out our policies and approach towards providing assistance for older and disabled customers, and those who simply need some support to make their journey.

Our customer leaflet, 'Making Rail Accessible' provides a practical guide, explaining what we do to assist older and disabled customers who travel with us and the standards of service they can expect. It is available at all staffed stations which we serve and on our website: [northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel](http://northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel)

In this document we provide information, so you understand how we plan to meet your expectations when you are using our services including travelling with Northern. We will explain how to find details of the assistance available, facilities and information you will need to plan your journey.

Booking and providing assistance

### Passenger Assist

If you can arrange your travel in advance, we participate in an assistance booking system called Passenger Assist. This is a rail industry-wide system used to book assistance at stations for passengers during their journey and to reserve seats and wheelchair spaces on trains where reservations are available. We will provide

assistance, when booked through Passenger Assist, at any station during the hours that trains are scheduled to serve that station. Details of these times are included on the individual station pages of the National Rail Enquiries website: [nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk)

We work with other train companies and station operators to agreed processes for booking and providing assistance. This means that if your journey involves a change of train onto other operators' services, assistance can be booked through a single point of contact. We can book assistance for your whole rail journey, even where part of the journey is with other train operators or where our services call at stations not managed by us.

When booking assistance, our Passenger Assist team check the station accessibility information, which is also available to view on the National Rail Enquiries website, to consider your individual needs and to ensure there is enough time to make any connections in your journey. We can provide station information by post on request, including in alternative formats such as large print.

We will also offer you the opportunity to purchase tickets for your journey when booking assistance and, where it is possible, make reservations on trains including priority seats and wheelchair spaces. Tickets collected from ticket machines at the majority of our stations or be dispatched by post (please leave five working days for delivery).

To book assistance, please contact our Assisted Travel team who are available 06:00 - 23:00, seven days a week when trains are running. We are not open Christmas Day.

Phone: **0800 138 5560** (Freephone, including from mobiles)

Email: [assistance@northernrailway.co.uk](mailto:assistance@northernrailway.co.uk)

Online: [northernrailway.co.uk/passenger-assistance-request](https://northernrailway.co.uk/passenger-assistance-request)

We will provide booking confirmation by email, where you have provided your details; or by post if requested.

We commit to sufficient resourcing so that your call will be answered within 30 seconds and aim to respond to email and online requests within 4 working hours. We monitor our performance against these targets on a regular basis.

### **Recommended notice period for booking assistance**

We currently recommend that assistance can be booked up to 11pm the day prior to travel or six hours in advance for same day travel, in order that we can make arrangements for the assistance you require. However, we understand that this is not always possible, so don't worry if you are not able to book assistance in advance. Many of our stations are staffed and all our trains have conductors, so where staff are available, they will always assist you, where reasonably practicable.

The ability to travel as and when you wish is important to everyone, so we are working closely with our suppliers and rail industry partners to reduce the notice period for booking assistance. By April 2022, through improved technology and shared rail industry processes, Northern will reduce the recommended notice period to two hours' notice when booking through Passenger Assist.

### **Assistance at stations**

Northern manages 479 stations, and the facilities at these stations vary considerably across the network. Many of our stations are staffed, while some have staff presence for part of the day and the remainder have no station-based staff.

When booking assistance, if your journey involves a station which does not have staff available at the time you are travelling, our Passenger Assist team will take this into account, together with the type of assistance you require and the overall accessibility of the station to ensure you can complete your journey. If our Passenger Assist team believes there is any risk of you not being provided with sufficient assistance at a particular station, they will discuss options with you and provide an alternative journey plan, assistance or transport to get you to your destination.

If you have not booked assistance when you arrive at a station, please speak with a member of staff or at an unstaffed station, please proceed to the platform and attract the attention of the Conductor when the train arrives. Our conductors are trained to look for customers who may need assistance when arriving at a station. Most Northern services are two and three car trains, and therefore when a train arrives at an unstaffed station, the conductor is clearly identifiable on the platform.

When you have boarded a train, our station staff will communicate with the Conductor and destination station staff, where appropriate, to ensure you are provided with assistance to get off the train. Where station staff provide assistance at both the origin and destination station, the destination station will be contacted. Each station will have a dedicated number and a responsible member of staff so that assistance can be efficiently communicated and delivered. In addition, to improve the reliability of assistance, we will adhere to a handover protocol as detailed in the ORR Accessible Travel Policy guidance.

When a Northern train arrives at a station, our staff will ensure that customers who have booked through Passenger Assist are assisted off the train as soon as possible. At terminating stations, we aim to provide assistance to alight within five minutes of the train's arrival into the station. Our staff will assist all passengers at Northern managed stations to board and alight trains.

## Boarding Ramps

Portable ramps are available at staffed Northern stations and on board all our trains to facilitate boarding and alighting from trains. The ramps are specifically designed to fit the train you are travelling on, so that customers with reduced mobility can safely move onto and off the trains.

Ramps are available for all customers who require assistance. If you have not booked assistance, please advise a member of station staff where available, or the Conductor who will arrange for the ramp to be put in place.

## Changes and disruption to services

When a journey changes, or we experience disruption to services, we will provide information about changes to train times, and alternative travel arrangements, in both aural and visual formats by Public Address announcements and Information Screens displayed at stations and on our trains.

Where reasonably practicable, for significant changes and disruption during a journey, conductors will pass through the train to check if customers require further support, and where possible, provide assistance as required. Staff will always pass through the train to assist customers where a train is being taken out of service before its final destination.

Our Mobile App and website show live train times, and help points are available at many stations providing a link to our Customer Information team who are also be able to assist you in continuing your journey.

During planned engineering works, we provide clear information at stations to advise passengers of replacement transport options, by signage including posters and announcements.

Occasionally a train's departure platform needs to be changed at short notice. Such a change will be shown on the customer information screens and will be announced aurally as soon as possible. When a change occurs, station staff where available will provide assistance and information to ensure you reach the revised departure platform, if it is accessible to you, as efficiently as possible.

## Assistance with onward travel – buses, taxis and trams

If your journey involves onward travel by another means of transport, where practicable our station staff will assist you to the relevant bus stop, pick up point, taxi rank or tram stop within the station boundary.

They are also able to provide information about local transport, including bus services and taxi companies.

Our Conductors can provide assistance to get on or off the train, however they are not able to provide assistance around the station.

Information about the availability of accessible taxis which serve our stations is displayed on the information poster at each Northern station and is available from our Customer Experience Centre, who can also advise on local taxi firms who can provide accessible taxis. Where possible, we also include this on station information posters. We aim to publish this online by December 2021. Furthermore, as contracts are renewed, we will require that all taxi companies contracted to use taxi ranks at our stations must supply an accessible taxi on request.

For further information on local bus and tram connections, contact Traveline on **0871 200 2233** or visit [traveline.info](https://www.traveline.info)

## Assistance with luggage

We recognise that luggage can be difficult to manage in the station environment for many disabled and older people. If you need your luggage carried, please tell us when you book assistance so we can ensure that station staff, where available, are ready to assist. Assistance can be given in taking customers and their luggage from train to station entrances (and vice versa) and when transferring between trains; wherever reasonably practicable.

Our staff must be able to lift luggage items safely, so please mind the limits set out in the National Rail Conditions of Travel, which state that you may bring with you up to two large items, and one small item.

## Seats on trains

We currently do not offer seat reservations on any Northern service, and our Passenger Assist team will make this clear when booking assistance for you. However, our conductors will make every effort to assist older and disabled passengers find a seat on-board.

Priority seating, which has extra legroom and situated near the doors, is available on all our new and refurbished trains. Priority seats are clearly labelled, and other passengers are requested to give up the seat, if required by an older or disabled person.

Wheelchair spaces are available on all our trains, and our Conductors assist in ensuring these dedicated spaces are kept clear and wheelchair users are given priority for this space.

We also offer a priority seating card scheme, which you can use to let our staff and other customers know that you require a seat. These cards are available from our Customer Experience Centre team and at station ticket offices.

## Assistance dogs

Assistance dogs are welcome on all Northern trains, free of charge, and can travel in any part of the train. Our Conductors will be happy to ensure that you are in the most appropriate seating on board the train, to make the journey comfortable for both you and your dog.

## Information provision

### Our Accessible Travel Policy leaflet for customers – Making Rail Accessible

To complement this Accessible Travel Policy document, our customer leaflet, 'Making Rail Accessible' provides a shorter, practical guide, explaining what we do to assist older and disabled customers who travel with us and the standards of service they can reasonably expect.

It is available at all staffed stations which we serve- on display in leaflet racks and at ticket offices and on our website in PDF format: [northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel](https://northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel) which is accessible using screen readers or other software with accessibility features (for example, Adobe Reader).

Alternative formats such as audio and large print versions of both this leaflet and our Accessible Travel Policy are available on request, by calling our Customer Experience Centre by phone or Text Relay, and on our website, free of charge. We aim to provide this to you within seven working days.

Additionally, through our relationship with local authorities, government agencies and accessibility groups across the North we will promote our services at selected key locations where public services are provided (e.g. libraries, GP surgeries, job centres, Citizens Advice branches, hospitals and post offices). We are currently evaluating how to best engage the communities we serve, particularly to go beyond traditional channels such as displaying information in railway stations.

Noting the broad geography of our network, this will include a variety of approaches, including collaborating with local user groups, Community Rail Partnerships and station adopters. Rail has an important part to play in improving social inclusion and reducing loneliness for older people.

We also display poster notices, at a height accessible to wheelchair users, at each station Northern manages advising customers how to obtain the Making Rail Accessible leaflet and policy document.

## Stations and train accessibility information

We will ensure that accessibility information relating to our stations and trains is readily available to you and is kept up to date.

In order to achieve this, we will maintain this information in an online PDF format, available at: [northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel](https://northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel), which is accessible using screen readers or other software with accessibility features (for example, Adobe Reader) and can be easily accessed via personal mobile devices. Alternative formats such as audio and large print versions of both this leaflet and our Accessible Travel Policy are available on request, by calling our Customer Experience Centre by phone or Text Relay, and on our website, free of charge. We aim to provide this to you within seven working days.

We will also provide the same information for use on the National Rail Enquiries website to ensure consistency of information.

## Step-Free Stations Map

To enable customers to plan their journey, we have produced a map showing all the stations served by Northern trains, which shows the level of step-free access available at each station. The map is shown at the end of this document.

## Station accessibility information

For information on whether the following accessible services and facilities are available at any station operated by Northern please see our website [northernrailway.co.uk/stations](https://northernrailway.co.uk/stations) or National Rail Enquiries/stations covering:

- Level of platform accessibility and how access is provided (e.g. lifts, ramps or steps)
- Disabled Parking
- Accessible Set Down and Pick-Up Points
- Ticket office opening hours
- Meeting Points for assistance
- Staffing hours and Assistance availability
- Accessible Ticket machines
- Customer Information systems
- Help Points (either staffed or audio contact with our Customer Experience Centre)
- Accessible toilets (including National Key toilets)
- Induction Loops
- Tactile paving
- Station Wheelchair availability
- Accessible waterproof waiting facilities
- Catering facilities
- Secure Station Accreditation

We are making accessibility improvements through our Station Investment Fund at several of our stations, including 25 Inclusive Hub stations which will offer obstacle-free routes between the station entrance and platforms. At other locations we are installing platform 'humps' to reduce the stepping distance at stations with low platforms.

## Train accessibility information

An overview of each type of train used on Northern services is available on our website, [northernrailway.co.uk/traintypes](https://northernrailway.co.uk/traintypes), including information on the general accessibility of each type and details of the routes on which different types of train are scheduled to run.

Following significant investment by Northern in new and refurbished trains, all Northern trains now offer:

- Two wheelchair spaces
- At least one Accessible toilet
- A Boarding ramp
- Designated priority seating
- Aural information
- Visual information
- A Conductor to provide assistance during the journey on every train.

### **Passenger journey information**

We understand it is important for you to trust and have confidence in the information we give. Some customers may travel by rail infrequently, and therefore may not know where or how to access important information, particularly during delays or during times of disruption. This section explains how we communicate accurate, clear and consistent information to you, especially if you have mental, intellectual or sensory considerations, at every stage of the journey – whether at home, online, on the move, at the station or on the train. Wherever possible, we aim to provide clear and consistent aural and visual information: both at the platform and on the approach to stations.

### **Stations – aural and visual information**

Many of our managed stations have a combination of customer information screens and automated public announcements providing accurate, clear and consistent aural and visual information.

At larger stations, a train's departure platform will sometimes need to be changed at short notice. The platform number will flash on the information screen to indicate that it has changed and the same information will be announced aurally as soon as practicable.

When a change occurs at staffed stations, where possible, our platform staff will provide assistance and information to ensure you reach the revised departure platform, if accessible to you, as efficiently as possible.

In the unlikely event the platform is not accessible to you, we will discuss options with you and arrange alternative transport, for example, a taxi, to the nearest station accessible to you, so that you can continue your journey.

At most of our stations, accessible Help Points are in place that enable customers to speak with a member of our Customer Information team who will provide any information you require for your journey.

We know providing information on the availability of accessible toilets on board our trains before boarding is important to our customers- we are currently assessing how to do this and aim to have information in place by December 2021.

### **Trains – aural and visual information**

We are committed to providing important aural and visual travel information on board the train in a format which is easy to understand.

All our trains are fitted with public address systems, and our Conductors are trained to make clear and concise announcements giving train information, including details of the next station and will do so on all services that do not have pre-recorded announcements.

Conductors are also trained to consider the needs of visually impaired, deaf or hearing-impaired people, when providing information. If your journey is disrupted, the conductor where possible may walk through the train to provide information and support customers. Announcements will provide enough time for you to prepare to alight

the train, particularly if you require assistance

From January 2020, many of our new trains will have a public address system integrated with real-time passenger information screens.

The system is connected to rail industry systems and displays relevant information, including:

- real-time information on the progress of the train
- information relating to the next station at which the train is to stop, including information about connections
- advice on alternative routes and trains available in the event of any delays or service disruption

Conductors have a smart device and can look up and pass on disruption information as well as details of connecting services, facilities at stations and train running.

### **Connections and wayfinding**

We work closely with local authorities to ensure that stations are clearly and consistently signposted from local roads. We also liaise with local authorities in the maintenance of Station Travel Plans for many stations, which include signage and interchange for other modes of transport. This is the responsibility of the Travel Integration and Accessibility Manager.

We are investing in stations, and part of this investment is replacing and renewing signs that are no longer fit for purpose. In making these changes we consider industry best practice, using sections K1– K9 of Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations: A Code of Practice, March 2015, which provides standards and guidance on signage at stations.

Our Passenger Assist booking team and station staff will provide you with information on how to make connections with other modes of transport, both prior to your journey and when travelling through our stations. There is also a useful information poster displayed at all Northern managed stations, which provides onward connection information and local maps.

When planning our train timetables, we consult with all local authorities and Community Rail Partnerships in the locality that our services run to, so we make sure the needs of local communities inform any decision we make concerning train service provision.

### **Ticket offices, information points, Help Points and our Customer Experience Centre**

You can obtain information about the services provided by Northern and all other train companies which serve the station at our ticket offices. In addition, larger stations, such as Leeds and Manchester Victoria also have dedicated information points located on the station concourse, with clear signage to their location within the station. The information points have variable height counters with information screens and leaflets positioned so that they can be accessed by everyone.

At staffed stations, service information is available in person at ticket offices, which are clearly signed within the station environment; and from station staff. In addition, accessible help points are available, which will put you in contact with a member of our Customer Information team who will provide any information you require for your journey. Where assistance is delivered by Northern station teams, a clearly marked Meeting Point is provided so customers with booked assistance can locate and meet our staff.

At unstaffed stations, accessible Help Points are usually in place that enable customers to speak with a member of our Customer Information team who will provide any information you require for your journey. In addition, an information poster is displayed at a height that can easily be read by a wheelchair user, at all Northern managed stations, which provides contact details, including freephone telephone number for our Customer Experience Centre, who are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week when trains are running. This includes a text relay service for customers who wish to communicate in this way.

We are committed to ensuring our staff, whether located on the station in person or in our Customer Experience Centre, have up-to-date information available to them on:

- The facilities, services and accessibility of all the stations at which Northern trains call. For consistency, this will be through access to National Rail Enquiries station pages
- Timetables for all Northern services
- Information on fares and ticketing
- Information relating to connections with other operators' train services
- Information regarding accessibility onto other forms of transport
- Delays, disruption, diversions and emergencies which affect the advertised timetable
- Confirmation of any arrangements that have been made through Passenger Assist, including bookings by other operators

### **Our website**

We are committed to achieving the industry-recognised Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) by April 2021, which define how to make web pages and content more accessible for people with disabilities. Our website, [northernrailway.co.uk](http://northernrailway.co.uk) works with screen readers, magnifiers, voice over software and in-browser accessibility functions, all of which is explained via a link on the homepage: [northernrailway.co.uk/WCAG](http://northernrailway.co.uk/WCAG).

We also provide a homepage link to our Assisted Travel page, [northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel](http://northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel) which explains the Passenger Assist service in a clear and concise manner, using plain English and avoiding the use of rail industry jargon.

It provides the necessary contact information and provisions for you to book assistance and purchase a ticket to travel (including details of any national discounts available to disabled passengers or persons with reduced mobility). It also sets out information of on-board facilities and station information, including accessibility information, staff availability, our Customer Experience Centre opening times and disabled parking spaces.

It also provides links to pages which detail information on any temporary reductions in accessibility and any delays and disruptions to facilities and train services where relevant.

It also informs you of any restrictions on the use of mobility aids including wheelchairs and mobility scooters together with details on how to obtain a Mobility Scooter Permit for travel on certain Northern routes and the priority seating and assistance card scheme.

In addition, there is a link to access the 'Making Rail Accessible' leaflet and details of how to obtain it in accessible formats. We also provide guidance on how you can provide feedback or make a complaint, and we include information on the availability of redress in the event something has gone wrong for an assistance booking.

### **Ticketing and fares**

If you are unable to buy a ticket before your journey, because our facilities are inaccessible or unavailable, you can do so without penalty during the journey or at the destination station and enjoy any reduction to which you are entitled, such as using a Disabled Persons Railcard.

We understand that disabilities are not always visible and if you are concerned about purchasing tickets, please contact staff on stations or on trains or our Customer Experience Centre for advice.

Our ticket office staff and Passenger Assist booking team are also familiar with the accessibility of our various types of trains, and they are trained to ensure that the tickets you buy will be appropriate to travel on the correct type of train.

Along with all other train operators, we participate in several schemes offering discounted fares, which are detailed below.

### If you are visually impaired

If you are a visually impaired person travelling with a companion and you do not hold a railcard, the following discounts on Anytime/Day tickets apply for both of you:

- Anytime Single or Return – 34% discount
- Anytime Day Single – 34% discount
- Anytime Day Return – 50% discount

No concession applies if you are travelling alone and you do not hold a railcard.

To obtain these discounts a document confirming your disability, issued by a recognised institution (for example Government Department, Local Authority, Guide Dog Ownership certification or RNIB) is required.

- Season tickets – you can be issued with one adult season ticket to cover two persons; the two travelling for the price of one. A different companion may travel with you on different days.

### If you remain in your wheelchair for a rail journey

If you remain in your wheelchair throughout the journey and you do not hold a railcard, the following discounts on Anytime/Day tickets will apply:

- Anytime Single/Return – 34% discount
- Anytime Day Single – 34% discount
- Anytime Day Return – 50% discount

The same discount will apply for one person travelling with you.

### Disabled Persons Railcard

The Disabled Persons Railcard is a type of discount card for tickets that allows those living with disabilities to save up to 1/3 on rail travel. An adult travelling with the cardholder will also qualify for 34% reduction.

There are no time restrictions on the Disabled Persons Railcard, so you can use it to get a discount on tickets at any time of the day. Further details of eligibility criteria and how to apply for a railcard can be found at:

Website: [disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](https://disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk)

Email: [disability@raildeliverygroup.com](mailto:disability@raildeliverygroup.com)

Call: **0345 605 0525**

Textphone: **0345 601 0132** (for people with hearing impairments)

Disabled Persons Railcard discounts are available on tickets sold by our Conductors, ticket machines, ticket offices and website & mobile app.

When purchasing a ticket on our website, there are prominent messages in place to advise customers that assistance is available for their journey. We continue to ensure that our contact centre and ticket office staff offer our assistance service to customers who mention they have a Disabled Persons Railcard.

### Senior Railcard

Available to anyone over the age of 60, a Senior Railcard provides the opportunity to save up to 1/3 on rail travel in the UK. Senior Railcards can be purchased online, over the phone or at any station ticket office with your passport or UK driving licence as proof of age.

Further details of eligibility criteria and how to apply for a railcard can be found at:

Website: [senior-railcard.co.uk](https://senior-railcard.co.uk)

Email: [railcardhelp@railcards-online.co.uk](mailto:railcardhelp@railcards-online.co.uk)

Call: **0345 300 0250**

There may be other Railcards which are suitable for you. Please visit [railcard.co.uk](http://railcard.co.uk) for further information.

### **Ticket machines**

Most of our stations have ticket machines, which have been designed to in compliance with the Department for Transport Joint code of practice (Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations, March 2015, section N2. Ticket sales points) and can issue tickets at the reduced rate to holders of a Disabled Persons Railcard and their companion.

### **Ticket gates**

Automatic ticket gates are in place at many of our stations and we always provide at least one wide aisle gate. When the gates are operational there will always be a member of staff on hand to support you to use them. We will ensure that these are locked open when the station is unstaffed, or when ticket gate staff are not in attendance.

### **Purchase of Advance tickets**

Where Advance tickets are available for purchase, we advise that you check that the required facilities (for example, accessibility of the train type) are available for the journey you are making before purchasing tickets. This may particularly apply for through journeys involving more than one train operator.

### **Alternative accessible transport**

If a station you wish to travel from is inaccessible to you, we will provide alternative transport, at no extra charge, to the nearest or most convenient station to enable you to continue your journey. For example, if there is only access via steps to some or all platforms or the train is not accessible to you, we will arrange alternative accessible road transport (such as a taxi) for you to the nearest suitable alternative station that is accessible to you. Please contact our Passenger Assist team, who will discuss your needs in order to arrange appropriate assistance. We recognise that circumstances will vary for individual passengers and we will consider your needs when discussing alternative transport options. Similarly, if you are unsure whether the station or train you intend to use is accessible to you, please call contact our Customer Experience Centre.

Wherever possible, we aim to ensure you can travel by rail for as much of your journey as is practicable. Northern have established and comprehensive contractual arrangements with coach, bus and taxi companies across the North to provide alternative transport arrangements, including a variety of accessible vehicle providers. Where relevant, all bus & coach vehicles comply with Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) or in exceptional circumstances operate under special authorisation pursuant to s.178 of the Equality Act 2010.

When we cannot run rail services due to engineering work or a replacement timetable, we aim to use rail replacement buses or coaches which are accessible. At least 12 weeks before all major planned engineering works, we will take appropriate steps to assess the requirement for accessible vehicles that are compliant with PSVAR and alternative accessible vehicles for use as substitute transport.

Northern work with a range of suppliers for rail replacement transport so that accessible vehicles are always provided wherever possible. If a vehicle does not meet your needs, we will provide alternative transport options, which our station staff or rail replacement co-ordinators will discuss with you.

When we cannot run rail services due to short notice disruption to advertised train services, for whatever reason, we will use the same approach as outlined above.

### **Mobility scooters and mobility aids**

#### **Wheelchairs**

All Northern trains can accommodate customers using a wheelchair, in the clearly designated spaces on board, providing they fit within the following dimensions:

Width: 700mm

Length: 1,200mm

Weight: 300kg (including the user)

If your wheelchair exceeds the above dimensions, please contact our Passenger Assist team on 0800 138 5560, who will be able to offer advice.

### **Our Northern Mobility Scooter Permit scheme**

We know how important mobility scooters are for some of our customers. So, we're more than happy to accommodate certain types of mobility scooters on our trains.

We can accept mobility scooters on board our trains as part of a scheme at 'mobility scooter friendly' stations for journeys on twenty specified routes and over 100 stations. For full details please see our Mobility Scooter Policy on our website: [northernrailway.co.uk/mobilityscooter](http://northernrailway.co.uk/mobilityscooter)

Stations vary considerably across our network. The gradient of the boarding ramp between platform and train at many stations presents a risk for customers and staff, while others have narrow platforms which means there is insufficient space to safely turn mobility scooters when the ramp between platform and train is extended. We need to take this into consideration, however Northern are committed to expanding our 'mobility scooter friendly stations' throughout 2021.

There are just a few things you need to know before you bring your mobility scooter with you on your journey.

### **What scooters we can take on our trains**

We can carry most Class 1 & 2 scooters that:

- Are no more than 700mm wide
- Are no more than 1,200mm long
- Have a turning circle radius of no more than 1,500mm
- Weigh no more than 300kg (including the weight of the customer)
- Have an anti-tip device
- Have four wheels
- Are foldable down to the size of a large suitcase (unless they have a valid permit under our Northern Mobility Scooter Permit scheme)

Class 1 & 2 mobility scooters can legally travel at speeds of up to 4mph on pavements. They're also only allowed on the road to cross from one side to the other.

### **You'll need a permit**

If you do wish to travel with your non-folding mobility scooter, we ask you to apply for a permit under our Northern Mobility Scooter Permit scheme before you bring a scooter on our trains. This is so we can check it meets the standards that make it safe for us to take it on board. There's an application form for a permit at the end of the Mobility Scooter Policy document published on our website – just follow the instructions. Once you have your permit, please bear in mind it's only valid for the scooter you told us about in your application and between the stations specified.

### **The permit is also only valid for travelling with Northern**

Other train operators and transport companies may not take your scooter on board, even if you show them your Northern permit. If you need to travel with another train operator or transport company for your trip, please make sure you check their arrangements for travelling with mobility scooters.

If you have been issued with a Permit for your scooter to travel between our 'mobility scooter friendly' stations, once you've got your scooter on board and safely positioned in the designated Accessible area, please follow any advice our staff give you to make your journey safe and comfortable. If you can transfer to a seat on the train, please do so.

### **Delays, disruption to facilities and services, and emergencies**

We understand that disruption to facilities and train services can have a significant impact on both the accessibility of rail services to people with reduced mobility and the

confidence of disabled people and other passengers with reduced mobility in travelling on the railway. Where disruption occurs, Northern is committed to doing everything possible to ensure that, wherever possible, customers can continue their journey.

If you have booked through Passenger Assist and any disruption to the advertised train service means your original arrangements, including connections are no longer valid, we will do our best to contact you and re-book any required assistance through Passenger Assist. We will request a contact number from you when you book assistance, which will help us to contact you in case of disruption. If we are unable to contact you for whatever reason, and disruption occurs during your journey, please ask our station staff or Conductor for assistance.

During disruption we will provide information about changes to train times and alternative travel arrangements through the Public Address and Customer Information Screens. Our App and website will include live departure times and passengers can use Help Points, where they are provided, to find further information.

In advance of planned disruption, we will place information on our website [northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel](https://northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel) for details of Rail Replacement Services.

In addition, at larger staffed stations, where reasonably practicable, we seek to deploy staff to the station concourse and platform to assist and support customers with alternative transport arrangements and other needs such as luggage. In the event of service disruption, we aim to use rail replacement buses or coaches which are accessible. We work with regular suppliers for rail replacement transport so that we can request accessible vehicles are provided during periods of disruption. However, this is sometimes more challenging when sourcing vehicles at short notice, particularly as the availability of accessible vehicles can be limited in some geographical areas.

In the event that a vehicle does not meet your needs, we will provide alternative transport options, which our station staff or rail replacement co-ordinators will discuss with you. We will make all reasonable endeavours to secure accessible rail replacements buses, coaches and taxis. If we are unable to secure accessible vehicles that are appropriate for the routes they would be used on, we will explain the reasons why.

Sometimes, particularly at larger stations, a train's departure platform will sometimes need to be changed at short notice. The platform number will flash on the information screen to indicate that it has changed and the same information will be announced aurally as soon as practicable.

When a change occurs at staffed stations, where possible, our platform staff will provide assistance and information to ensure you reach the revised departure platform, if accessible to you, as efficiently as possible.

In the unlikely event the platform is not accessible to you, we will arrange alternative transport, for example, a taxi, to the nearest station accessible to you, so that you can continue your journey. We will discuss available options with you wherever possible.

When the level of accessibility of facilities at a station is less than that normally provided, for example as a result of lifts breaking down or toilets being closed for refurbishment, we are committed to making every reasonable effort to provide replacement arrangements or facilities, wherever possible. This may involve making alternative transport arrangements for you to or from the nearest accessible station in the event of station lifts being out of order.

## Emergency procedures

Every staffed Northern station has a local emergency plan which details the actions that station staff must take in an emergency. These plans include detailed evacuation arrangements and take into account the needs of disabled and older customers, including those who use mobility scooters and wheelchairs. If you are a wheelchair user and you are in an area where no safe evacuation route exists, a place of safety will have been pre-identified for you (accompanied by a member of staff) to await rescue by the emergency services.

The assistance provided to disabled passengers varies between locations based upon a risk assessment and includes the need to identify those who may need assistance, provision of wheelchairs and ramps and identification of and direction to safe havens if normal evacuation routes are not accessible.

Our policy is not to evacuate wheelchair passengers or other passengers with significantly reduced mobility without the support of the emergency services unless the situation is life-threatening. On the type of incident and risks involved, we may move you to a safer part of the train until arrangements can be made to move the train to the nearest station. We will endeavour to ensure you are always accompanied. If it becomes essential to evacuate a train between stations, we will work closely with the emergency services to attend and provide assistance with the evacuation.

## Station facilities

### Left luggage

Northern does not currently provide left luggage facilities at any of our managed stations. Accessible left luggage facilities are provided by Network Rail at the following principal stations: Leeds, Liverpool Lime Street and Manchester Piccadilly. London North Eastern Railway provide facilities at Newcastle & York. Our Customer Experience Centre can provide more information about left luggage facilities, including contact details.

### Station facilities and services

We are committed to ensuring that the information regarding Northern stations and train services is up to date. We want customers requiring assistance or particular facilities to be aware of any limitations and / or temporary changes or restrictions. For example, this includes:

- where stations have a physical constraint that prevents some disabled people from using it;
- where significant temporary work that affects station accessibility is being carried out;
- where there are changes to stations that would make them temporarily inaccessible (e.g. when facilities such as lifts and toilets at stations are out of order);

Our Travel Integration and Accessibility Manager has overall responsibility for ensuring the information provided on the National Rail Enquiries website, including the Station Information page and Journey Planner, regarding accessibility and details of the times staff assistance is available at our stations is updated, including:

- Level of accessibility from station entrance to platforms (e.g. lifts, ramps, steps)
- Staffing hours and assistance availability
- Location of Meeting Points for assistance
- Accessible waiting rooms and toilets
- Accessible car parking and set down/pick-up points

For full details please see our up-to-date stations facilities section at [northernrailway.co.uk/stations](https://northernrailway.co.uk/stations) or visit the National Rail Enquiries website at [nationalrail.co.uk/stations](https://nationalrail.co.uk/stations), for stations not operated by Northern.

### Disabled parking

Car parking facilities are available at stations throughout the Northern network. At most stations there is a small

charge. Information about our car parks can be found at [northernrailway.co.uk/stations](http://northernrailway.co.uk/stations). Most larger stations have a tarmac or concrete surfaced car park, with designated parking spaces available for Blue Badge holders marked by the International Symbol for Access.

Our Station Managers and car park contractors are responsible for the ongoing monitoring of the use of designated parking bays in station car parks to ensure that motorists without disabled parking badges are not using the designated parking bays.

Where offences are identified, penalty notices are issued supported by photographic evidence. The initial penalty notice is £50, which escalates to £80 if not paid within 14 days (subject to any appeal received).

We regularly review the demand to ensure that we have sufficient car parking spaces available and commit to providing to the Department for Transport on a periodic basis the usage figures for Blue Badge spaces where the number of designated disabled parking spaces is less than 5% of the total number of parking spaces available.

### Alterations to facilities

When our advertised facilities and services are not available, at a station and or on-board our trains, facilities, we will make every effort to provide alternative facilities.

Should the facilities on which you rely for your journey become temporarily unavailable on a train or at a station, we will update the system within 24 hours of notification of a problem and provide an estimated time for when the facility will be functioning again. If we have your contact details our Customer Experience Centre will endeavour to contact you by email, telephone or text relay, this includes:

- Where stations have a physical constraint preventing use by some disabled people
- Where significant temporary work affects station accessibility
- Where changes to stations make them temporarily inaccessible (e.g. lifts or station toilets out of order);
- Where changes to train facilities materially affect disabled customers – e.g. the temporary use of inaccessible trains – where reasonably practicable to do so; and
- Emergency engineering work

Our commitment to provide this information includes instances when stations or trains become inaccessible in the short or longer term. This information will be available to our station staff and to you through our website, ticket offices, Customer Experience Centre, Passenger Assist team and station Help Points. As part of our ongoing review process, we will update the information on our website to ensure the details are current.

### Third party provided facilities at Northern managed stations

We will make every effort to ensure that any services and facilities provided by a third party are as accessible as possible; this requirement will be included in the relevant contracts and enforced by our station property management team. Where reasonably practicable, our Station Managers monitor the services and facilities provided by third parties, to ensure they are not located where they will cause an obstruction. While third-party service providers have their own duties under the Equality Act, we will make every effort to ensure that any services and facilities provided by others, such as station catering outlets, are accessible to you.

### Station entrances

We will maintain the accessibility of our stations and will not permanently close any station entrances without first consulting with the Department for Transport (DfT), Transport Focus and local access groups and receiving approval by the DfT. From time to time we may need to temporarily restrict access to stations, e.g. due to improvement work. If this happens, we will ensure the needs of older and disabled people are considered and will provide adequate information and a suitable alternative if necessary.

### **Redress: what to do if something goes wrong with assistance**

Customers are at the heart of all that we do, and we work hard to ensure we deliver assistance in the right way for every journey. However, sometimes things go wrong, and we may not be able to provide the level of service that we promised.

When assistance has been booked through Passenger Assist but has not been provided as you expected, please contact our Customer Experience Centre and we will investigate why this happened, and what action we intend to take to ensure it does not reoccur.

Our Customer Experience Centre can be contacted by:

Phone: **0800 200 6060** (Freephone, including from mobiles)

Text Relay: **18001 0800 200 6060**

Email: [complaints@northernrailway.co.uk](mailto:complaints@northernrailway.co.uk)

We understand the inconvenience caused when assistance is not delivered, so we will also provide you with appropriate redress for your journey.

We aim to make the process of raising an issue as simple as possible, so we provide details of how to do so in our Making Rail Accessible leaflet and on our website: [northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel](http://northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel)

If the issue arose when you travelled on a Northern service, we will own the response and resolution of the issue. If your journey involved multiple train companies, we will co-ordinate a single response on behalf of all operators involved. If the substantive part of the assistance not delivered was while travelling with another train operator, to ensure you receive the best response we may arrange for the complaint to be transferred to them. We will always ask for your consent prior to doing this.

Our arrangements do not affect or limit any rights you have as a consumer under, for example, The Consumer Rights Act 2015, to a different level of compensation, including consequential loss, where Northern is at fault.

We always consider each claim made to us on its individual merits.

## **Strategy and management**

In this section we set out how we:

- Embed the provision of services to disabled people within our business and our project planning
- Will continue to improve access to the railways for disabled people and those with reduced mobility
- Ensure our staff have the resources, skills and confidence to deliver assistance to customers
- Measure the success of our Accessible Travel Policies.

### **Strategy**

Northern strives to provide rail services which are accessible to all, so that customers can travel with confidence, safe in the knowledge that support is available at each stage of their journey, when needed.

We are committed to assisting and enabling people to use the railways confidently, considering the wide range of different needs of disabled and older people, and continuously improving the quality and reliability of assistance available.

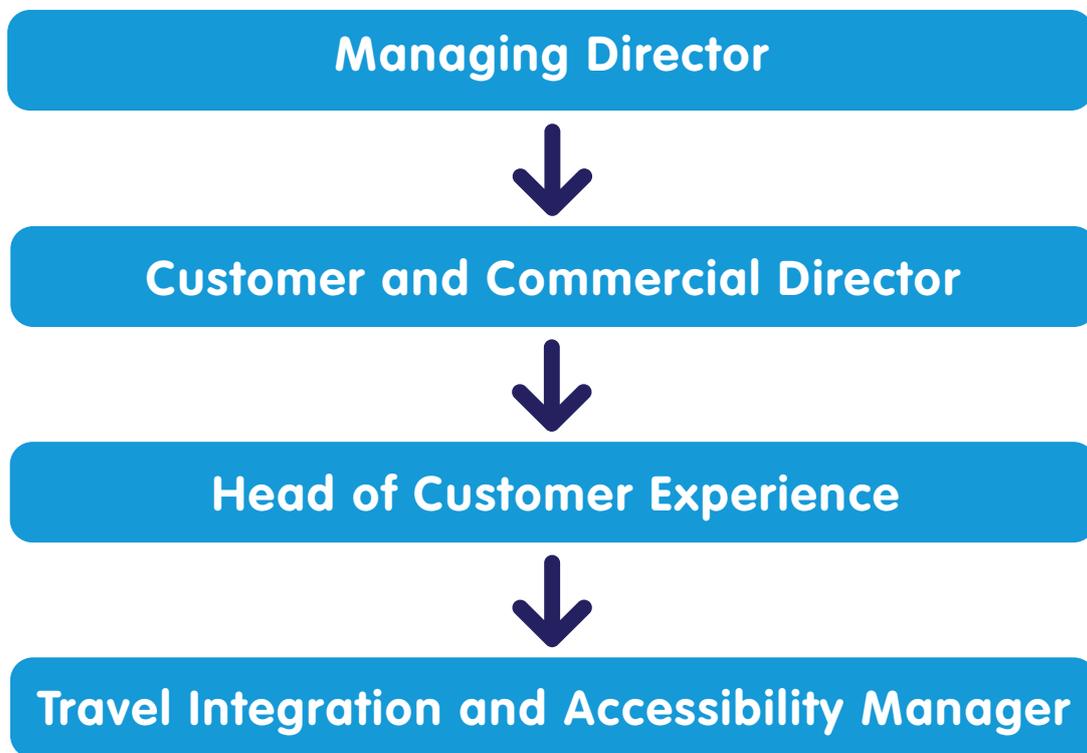
We work with our rail industry colleagues, franchising and regulatory authorities, Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), Transport Focus, Community Rail Partnerships, Rail Ombudsman and other stakeholder organisations, especially those representing all customers, to further improve the information, facilities and services we provide.

Our Accessible Travel Policy fulfils our obligations under our Passenger and Station Operator Licences, the DfT's Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations: A Code of Practice 2015, the ORR Accessible Travel Policy Guidance 2020 and takes into account the provisions within the Equality Act 2010.

We will ensure that new facilities on our trains and at the stations we manage are designed to meet the standards of the Persons of Reduced Mobility Technical Specification for Interoperability (PRM-TSI) regulations as will all projects which replace and/or renew existing facilities. Whilst we will make every possible effort, should we for any reason not be in a position to meet these standards on stations we will consult the DfT at the earliest stage in the design process so that suitable alternatives can be considered, and dispensation sought from the Code of Practice 2015 referenced above.

### **Management arrangements**

The provision of services to disabled and older people is an integral part of our business planning process, championed by our Travel Integration & Accessibility Manager.



Establishing and maintaining our Accessible Travel Policy is a condition of our Passengers' Licence and Station Licence. For compliance purposes the Commercial & Customer Director and our four Regional Directors are currently accountable for both licences.

Our Travel Integration & Accessibility Manager has responsibility for implementing our Accessible Travel Policy. This includes consulting with disabled people, community groups, and charities to understand where services and facilities do not meet the needs of disabled people, and then work with the internal teams to prioritise funding requests and tie in with other projects where possible. In collaboration with the Head of Customer Experience, this role will liaise with the relevant directorates and managers across the Northern business to work on the specific tasks that compliance with the Accessible Travel Policy necessitates.

In formulating business cases for investment in new facilities, the Head of Customer Experience will assess the likely return on investment of improvements for disabled and older customers. Such business cases will therefore

consider the likely revenue increase as a result of making our services and facilities more accessible to all customers. Their success will be monitored via customer feedback, relevant passenger survey results and the return on investments by increased ticket sales.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

We have a culture of continuous improvement and will therefore measure the quality of service relating to assistance provided. Many of our service quality metrics are reported to the Office for Rail & Road and published in the Northern Customer Report which we publish on our website.

The tools that we will routinely use to measure the quality of service given to disabled passengers include:

- Monitoring complaints about assistance
- Monitoring complaints about facilities being inaccessible
- National Rail Passenger Survey results relating to accessibility
- Outputs from our internal Service Quality Audits which tests our services and facilities
- Feedback from the Northern Accessibility User Group
- Holding an accessibility event at Northern's annual Community Rail Conference to engage and receive feedback from stakeholders.
- Using Passenger Assist booking data to track trends in assisted booking and monitor growth and usage, and
- Providing post-travel surveys for customers who have booked assistance to give feedback on their experience. These will complement the ORR's national survey of Passenger Assist users and help us better understand customer needs.

Periodic progress reports will be provided to the Board of Directors, highlighting the action Northern is taking on improving travel for disabled and older people, and our performance against the metrics we set out above.

We will regularly review this policy and a report on findings will be sent to the DfT and the ORR. This will include details of the achievements of objectives, new initiatives to improve our service to disabled customers and any difficulties we have encountered with the implementation of this policy.

### **Access improvements**

We will continue to improve access and services as follows:

- Rolling out 281 brand new accessible carriages during 2019 and 2020 and refurbishing all our other trains. The accommodation for wheelchair users will double as every Northern train will offer two designated wheelchair spaces.
- Investing over £40m in station improvements including creating Inclusive Hub stations, with obstacle free access at 25 stations: Barnsley Interchange, Barrow-in-Furness, Blackburn, Blackpool North, Bolton, Bradford Forster Square, Bradford Interchange, Chorley, Goole, Harrogate, Heald Green, Kirkham & Wesham, Leyland, Lytham, Morpeth, Poulton-le-Fylde, Shipley, Sunderland, Wakefield Kirkgate, Warrington Central, Whitehaven, Wigan Wallgate, Wilmslow, Windermere and Worksop.
- Installation of at least 18 Platform Humps at stations with lower than usual platforms to make it easier for customers to access trains
- In May 2019 we welcomed a new inclusivity forum, the Northern Accessibility User Group (NAUG), comprising a wide range of participants such as people with physical, sensory or cognitive disabilities, including non-visible disabilities and older people. NAUG meets at least once per quarter will be consulted on all future accessibility and inclusion improvements and help guide our future investment plans.
- We continue to work closely with Enhance the UK on developing and delivering a continuous programme of disability awareness training for all our customer facing staff and their managers.

- During 2021 we will roll our priority seating and assistance card scheme to provide additional support to customers who need support communicating when travelling.
- We continue to spend £250,000 each year on minor accessibility improvements at stations.

We are refurbishing the remainder of our fleet to make them accessible. We have completed more than 90% of this refurbishment, however on some of our routes, there are a small number of trains that have yet to benefit from these improvements and therefore may not have all the facilities you would expect to be available, particularly accessible toilets. Further information, including details on the specific types of train affected is available here: [northernrailway.co.uk/help/accessibility-on-northern-trains](https://northernrailway.co.uk/help/accessibility-on-northern-trains)

We will continue to review our Accessible Travel Policy annually and incorporate feedback we receive from you, customer organisations and other stakeholders regarding the services we provide. The feedback will be vital in shaping our policies and making continuous improvements.

### **Working with disabled customers, local communities and local authorities**

In preparing our Accessible Travel Policy we have consulted with a cross-section of disability stakeholders. Specifically, we have consulted with members of the Northern Accessibility User Group concerning our ongoing accessibility and inclusion proposals and the development of our accessible travel policies, such as conveying mobility scooters on Northern trains. Key organisations that represent the interests of customers with disabilities – including the Office for Rail and Road, the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, the Department for Transport and Transport Focus – have reviewed and approved our Accessible Travel Policy.

There are several key industry partners that we work with to improve the accessibility of our services. For example:

- Network Rail – collaboration on station improvement and investment programmes
- Transport Focus – understanding research on customer priorities
- Rail North Partnership – on the long-term strategy for rail in the North of England
- Passenger Transport Executives – involvement in the creation and delivery of regional transport policies

We are in regular contact with key stakeholders through our Customer and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. This sets out how we engage with all our customers, potential customers and other stakeholders in the communities we serve to understand and respond to their experiences. Noting the broad geography of our network, this will include a variety of approaches, including collaborating with local user groups, Community Rail Partnerships and station adopters. These stakeholders include:

- Local authorities
- Disability groups
- Community groups
- Rail user groups and Community Rail Partnerships

At a national level, we liaise with national organisations such as Age UK, Scope and RNIB via our trade body the Rail Delivery Group (RDG).

We will actively promote the availability of assisted travel, with a focus on the customer leaflet, 'Making Rail Accessible'. As well as ensuring this leaflet is available at staffed stations our trains call at, in prominent locations where public services are provided and online, [we will also advertise the leaflet on station posters, on train services and via social media].

### **Staff training**

We know that staff training plays an important part of delivering a railway which is accessible for everyone. We work hard to provide Northern colleagues with the skills and understanding they need to consider accessibility in everything we do.

All new staff receive disability awareness training as part of their corporate induction, while all existing staff including senior managers and leadership team, receive refresher training at least every two years. Our training materials have been created in partnership with a disability charity and focusses on the knowledge, skills and tools that are necessary to enable our employees to assist older customers and those with disabilities in the best possible way. The training is delivered by of older and disabled people who use the railway who share their lived experience.

This brings to life and demonstrates the importance of providing assistance, the individual personal impact of the services we provide, and the decisions we make.

Northern has considerable expertise in providing disability awareness training. This includes a full day of face to face classroom-based induction training, led by disability training experts from our charity partners. We have also developed industry leading video training content, again in collaboration with our charity partner, which supports our face to face learning and provides valuable reference material for colleagues, to access at any time.

Northern is committed to ensuring all the training requirements are delivered by July 2021 and have commenced our analysis of training requirements by job role, noting the breadth of experience of our 6000 colleagues across the business.

### Training outcomes

The Office for Rail and Road have set out in their guidance nine mandatory training outcomes set out, which our training includes:

1. Understanding disabled people and their everyday challenges: challenging misconceptions and understanding barriers to access and inclusion.
2. Equality Legislation: exploring and understanding the Equality Act 2010.
3. Defining Disability: an introduction to the various definitions of disability and the appropriate terminology.
4. Recognising passengers who need assistance: exploring physical and non-physical impairments to enable staff to assess individual needs and provide appropriate assistance.
5. Railway Regulatory Framework: understanding regulations and policies that are relevant within the railway industry.
6. Passenger Assist: how it works for disabled passengers and the role of railway staff in delivering the service.
7. Communication: finding a way to communicate with disabled people with patience, respect and dignity.
8. Accessibility in stations: the identification of accessible features at the stations where staff work as well as at the key destination stations on the Northern network.
9. Providing safe assistance: duties and process to ensure that both staff and customers remain safe at all times.

The course aim is to build our colleagues knowledge and skills to enable them to best meet the needs of customers who have a disability and/or require our support; and to this in accordance with both the law, The Equality Act 2010 and Northern's commitment to further improve the accessibility of our services for all of our customers.

In addition to the above, all Northern staff who interact directly with customers will receive training that delivers training outcomes relating to customer and staff communication, accessibility within and around stations and how to provide safe assistance. We ensure that all relevant staff receive the training appropriate to their roles with regards to:

- The use of equipment provided to assist older people and those with disabilities, such as ramps, station wheelchairs and induction loops

- Communicating with people with different disabilities
- Communicating clearly by phone with people who may have difficulty speaking, hearing or understanding.

Our Customer Experience Centre, Passenger Assist and Social Media teams also receive specific training for communicating clearly with people who may have difficulty speaking, hearing or understanding. This helps them understand the importance of:

- Clarity of speech
- Intonation
- Emphasis
- Timeliness
- Language.

This training is designed to raise awareness of potential communication issues and emphasis how ineffective communication can impact upon disabled and older customers.

By 31 December 2021, all current customer facing Northern staff will have met the mandatory training outcomes set out above. By this date, all new Northern staff, including senior and key managers, as part of their induction, will also receive training in understanding the challenges facing disabled people, equality legislation, defining disability, recognising passengers who need assistance, the regulatory framework of the rail industry, and how the Passenger Assist service operates.

Where reasonably practicable, we will ensure that any agency or temporary staff that interact with customers receive an appropriate level of disability awareness training, which will focus on Passenger Assist, communication and providing safe assistance, as outlined in outcomes 6, 7 and 9 in the mandatory training guidance noted by the ORR.

As part of our contractual arrangements with bus, coach and taxi providers for Rail Replacement Transport, we will require operators to confirm that drivers have received appropriate disability awareness training, as outlined in outcomes 6,7 and 9 of the ORR training guidance. This reflects the process for other requirements- such as drivers holding appropriate driving licences, compliance to relevant legislation and safety knowledge.

Furthermore, anyone employed at a contact centre who provides information or advice directly to passengers on our behalf will receive an appropriate version of the Northern training course covering, as a minimum, the Passenger Assist service and customer communication.

All Northern staff will receive refresher training within two years of the initial training they have received, and as a minimum every two years thereafter; in order to ensure the mandatory training outcomes described above are maintained.

We will harness the experience and expertise of people with a range of experience and disabilities in the development and delivery of our training materials. Members of the Northern Accessibility User Group will provide advice and resources in support of this aim, on a voluntary basis, and will monitor our performance.

We will continue to ensure that all statistics, legislation and language used in training are up to date.

This approach to training will ensure all Northern staff, and particularly staff who interact with customers have the skills and knowledge to enable them to best meet the needs of customers and to do this in accordance with both the law and Northern's commitment to further improve levels of accessibility.

As part of our contractual arrangements with bus, coach and taxi providers for Rail Replacement Transport, we will require operators to confirm that drivers have received appropriate disability awareness training. This reflects the process for other requirements - such as drivers holding appropriate driving licences, compliance to relevant legislation and safety knowledge.



NORTHERN

# Making Rail Accessible: helping older and disabled passengers



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## Introduction

Northern are committed to supporting everyone in the communities we serve including older and disabled people, families with pushchairs and small children and those who need more time to board or alight, to use the railways confidently.

Northern strives to provide rail services which are accessible to everyone, so that customers can travel with confidence, safe in the knowledge that extra support is available at each stage of their journey, when needed.

This leaflet, 'Making Rail Accessible' provides a practical guide to travelling with Northern, explaining what we do to assist older and disabled customers and the standards of service you can expect.

We will explain how to find details of the assistance available, facilities and information you will need to plan your journey.

Our commitment to assisting all customers, particularly older and disabled people to travel with confidence includes:

- assistance at our stations and our trains, or when making connections
- alternative accessible transport when our stations or trains are inaccessible
- clear, consistent and up-to-date customer information
- a range of discounts to reduce the cost of travel for disabled people and a companion

## Assistance: what is available and how to get it

We will provide assistance at any Northern station accessible to you, during the hours that trains are scheduled to serve that station. Many of our stations are staffed and all of our trains have conductors, so where staff are available, they will always support you and provide assistance that you request, where reasonably practicable. The majority of Northern services are two and three carriage trains, and therefore when a train arrives at an unstaffed station, the conductor is identifiable on the platform.

### Passenger Assist

If you can arrange your travel in advance, we participate in an assistance booking system called Passenger Assist. This is a rail industry-wide system used to book assistance at stations for passengers during their journey and to reserve seats and wheelchair spaces on trains where reservations are available.

We currently recommend that assistance can be booked up to 11pm the day prior to travel or six hours in advance for same day travel, in order that we can make arrangements for the assistance you require.

The ability to travel as and when you wish is important to everyone, so we are working

closely with our suppliers and rail industry partners to reduce the notice period for booking assistance. By April 2022, through improved technology and shared rail industry processes, Northern will reduce the recommended notice period to two hours' notice when booking through Passenger Assist.

To book assistance, please contact our Assisted Travel team who are available 06:00 - 23:00, seven days a week when trains are running:

Phone: **0800 138 5560** (Freephone, including from mobiles)

Text Relay: **18001 0800 138 5560**

Email:

**[assistance@northernrailway.co.uk](mailto:assistance@northernrailway.co.uk)**

Online:

**[northernrailway.co.uk/passenger-assistance-request](https://northernrailway.co.uk/passenger-assistance-request)**



We will provide booking confirmation by email, where you have provided your details; or by post if requested.

We aim to answer your call within 30 seconds and to respond to email and online requests within 4 working hours. We monitor our performance against these targets on a regular basis.

Northern work with other train companies and station operators to agreed processes for booking and providing assistance. This means that if your journey involves a change of train onto other operators' services, assistance can be booked through a single point of contact. We can book assistance for your whole rail journey, even where part of the journey is with other train operators or where our services call at stations not managed by us.

When booking assistance, our Passenger Assist team check the station accessibility information, which is also available to view on the Northern website: [northernrailway.co.uk/stations](https://northernrailway.co.uk/stations), to consider your individual journey and to ensure there is sufficient time to make any connections. We can provide station information by post on request, including in alternative formats such as large print.

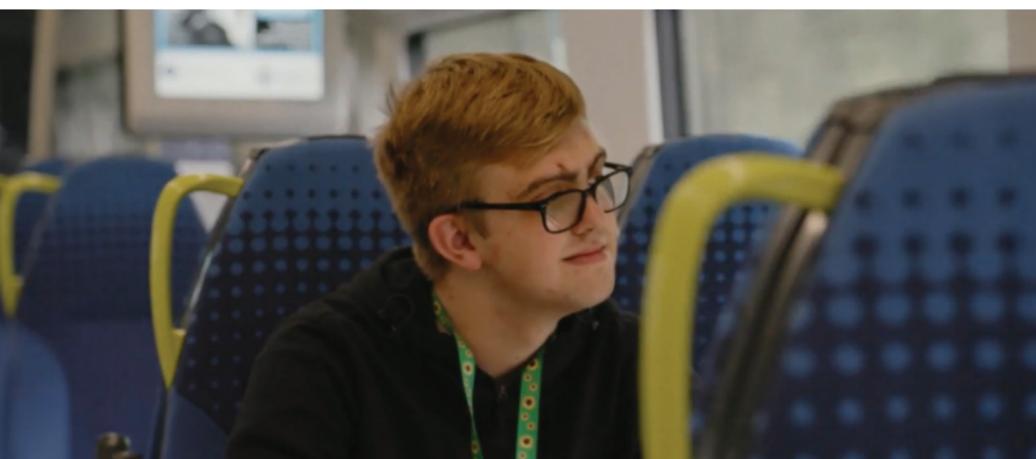
If a station you wish to travel from is inaccessible to you, we will provide alternative transport, at no extra charge, to the nearest or most convenient station

to enable you to continue your journey. For example, if there is only access via steps to some or all platforms, we will arrange alternative accessible road transport (such as a taxi) for you to the nearest suitable alternative station that is accessible to you. Please contact our Passenger Assist team, who will discuss your needs in order to arrange appropriate assistance.

Assistance and support are available at each stage of your journey, if and when you need it. This includes:

### **Before you travel:**

- Assistance with planning your journey
- Explaining the accessibility of our network and the facilities available at the station and on the train
- Making seat reservations on services operated by other train companies
- Providing the opportunity to purchase tickets, including Advance fares, for your journey at the same time as booking assistance.

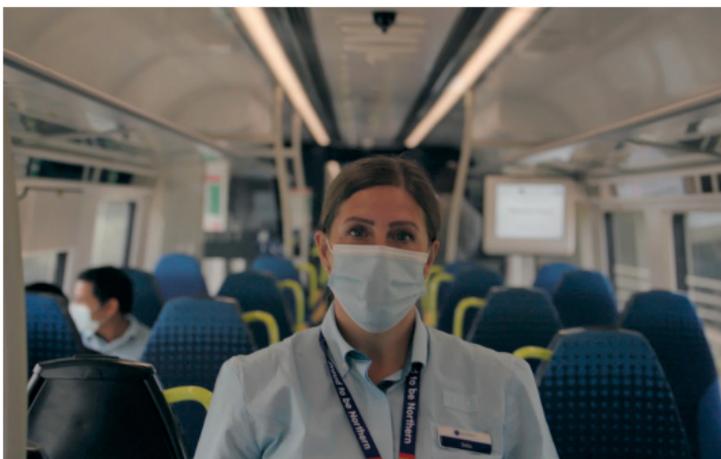


## At the station

- Assistance with getting on and off the train at every station
- Support with luggage at larger, staffed stations
- Assistance through the station and to your platform, at larger staffed stations
- Boarding and alighting with wheelchairs, scooters and mobility aids
- Assistance to and from connecting train services and onward transport such as bus, tram and taxi within the station area.

## Training

We know that staff training plays an important part in delivering a railway which is accessible for everyone, so we work hard to provide Northern colleagues with the skills and understanding they need to assist customers with a range of accessibility requirements including visible and non-visible disabilities.



## What to expect: our commitment to passengers at every stage of the journey

### Before you travel

We understand it is important to have accurate, helpful information available when planning your journey so you know what to expect at our stations and on trains and can travel with confidence.

Station information, including the accessibility of the station and the facilities available such as parking and staff availability can be found on the Northern website: [northernrailway.co.uk/stations](https://northernrailway.co.uk/stations). Similarly, information relating to the accessibility of our trains and other useful information can be found on our website: [northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel](https://northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel). Our Customer Experience Centre are happy to discuss journey planning with you, and provide station information by post on request, including in alternative formats such as large print.

Our Mobile App and website show live train times, and both provide information regarding any current or future significant changes or delays to Northern services.

## How to buy tickets

We have a range of options available for buying tickets ahead of travel or on the day, including:

### Online

Our website [northernrailway.co.uk](http://northernrailway.co.uk) offers a range of tickets and journey planning tools.

You can receive your tickets on a smartphone via the Northern app, by First Class post (please allow five days for delivery); or collect your pre-paid tickets from ticket machines at stations.

### On mobile/app

You can buy your ticket on your smartphone anytime, anywhere with the free Northern mobile app. Buy tickets securely on our app and collect your tickets within 15 minutes from station ticket machines or if you've selected the new m-ticket delivery option, just show your smart phone to the conductor on the train.

### Ticket Machines at stations

Ticket machines are available at most Northern stations. You can buy a range of tickets for immediate use and accept most credit/ debit cards as well as cash. Please check your journey times and individual ticket restrictions when purchasing your ticket to be sure that it is valid for your planned train.



## Station ticket offices

You can buy the full range of tickets from staffed ticket offices. Our ticket offices will accept all major credit/debit cards, cash and Rail Travel vouchers.

## On trains

At stations where no ticket office or ticket machines are provided, or the ticket office is closed; tickets can be purchase from the conductor on the train.

We understand that disabilities are not always visible and if you are concerned about purchasing tickets, please contact station staff where available or our Customer Experience Centre for advice.

If you are unable to buy a ticket before your journey, because our facilities are inaccessible or unavailable, you can do so without penalty during the journey or at the destination station and enjoy any reduction to which you are entitled, such as using a Disabled Persons Railcard.

Along with all other train operators, we participate in several schemes offering discounted fares, which are detailed below.

## Discounts and Railcards

### If you are visually impaired

If you are a visually impaired person travelling with a companion and you do not hold a railcard, the following discounts on Anytime/Day tickets apply for both of you:

- Anytime Single or Return – 34% discount
- Anytime Day Single – 34% discount
- Anytime Day Return – 50% discount

No concession applies if you are travelling alone and you do not hold a railcard.

To obtain these discounts a document confirming your disability, issued by a recognised institution (for example Government Department, Local Authority, Guide Dog Ownership certification or RNIB) is required.

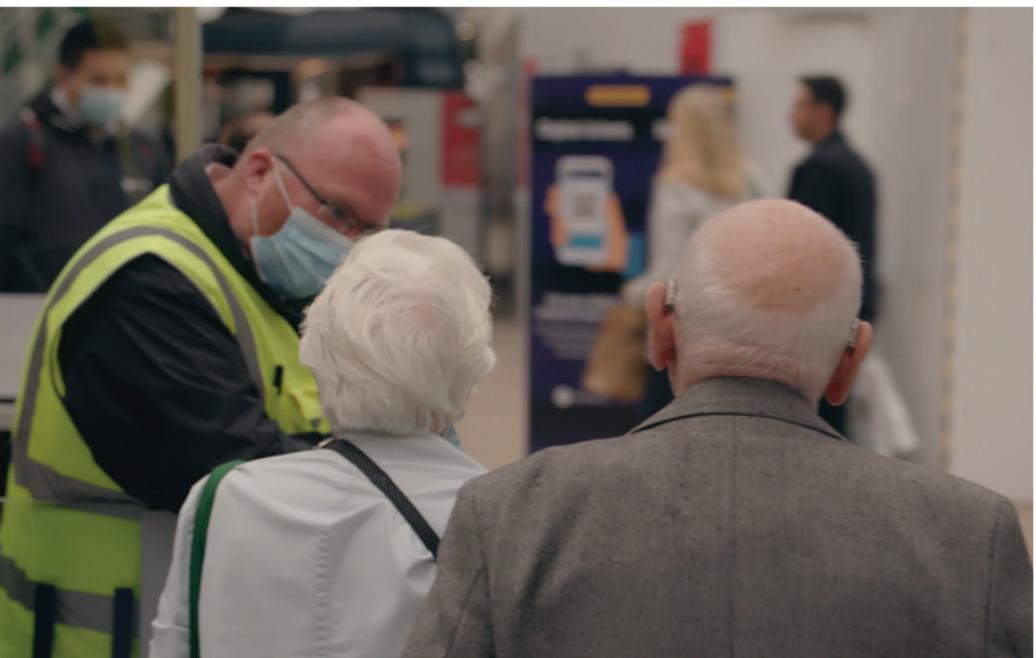
- Season tickets – you can be issued with one adult season ticket to cover two persons; the two travelling for the price of one. A different companion may travel with you on different days.

## If you remain in your wheelchair for a rail journey

If you remain in your wheelchair throughout the journey and you do not hold a railcard, the following discounts on Anytime/Day tickets will apply:

- Anytime Single/Return – 34% discount
- Anytime Day Single – 34% discount
- Anytime Day Return – 50% discount

The same discount will apply for one person travelling with you.



## **Disabled Persons Railcard**

The Disabled Persons Railcard is a type of discount card for tickets that allows those living with disabilities to save up to 1/3 on rail travel. An adult travelling with the cardholder will also qualify for 34% reduction.

There are no time restrictions on the Disabled Persons Railcard, so you can use it to get a discount on tickets at any time of the day. Further details of eligibility criteria and how to apply for a railcard can be found at:

Website: [\*\*disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk\*\*](https://disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk)

Email: [\*\*disability@raildeliverygroup.com\*\*](mailto:disability@raildeliverygroup.com)

Call: **0345 605 0525**

Textphone: **0345 601 0132** (for people with hearing impairments)

Disabled Persons Railcard discounts are available on tickets sold by our Conductors, ticket machines, ticket offices and website and mobile app.

When purchasing a ticket on our website, there are prominent messages in place to advise customers that assistance is available for their journey. We continue to ensure that our contact centre and ticket office staff offer our assistance service to customers who mention they have a Disabled Persons Railcard.

## Senior Railcard

Available to anyone over the age of 60, a Senior Railcard provides the opportunity to save up to 1/3 on rail travel in the UK. Senior Railcards can be purchased online, over the phone or at any station ticket office with your passport or UK driving licence as proof of age.

Further details of eligibility criteria and how to apply for a railcard can be found at:

Website: [senior-railcard.co.uk](https://senior-railcard.co.uk)

Email: [railcardhelp@railcards-online.co.uk](mailto:railcardhelp@railcards-online.co.uk)

Call: **0345 300 0250**

There may be other Railcards which are suitable for you. Please visit [railcard.co.uk](https://railcard.co.uk) for further information.



## Wheelchairs

All Northern trains can accommodate customers using a wheelchair, in the clearly designated spaces on board, providing they fit within the following dimensions:

Width: **700mm**

Length: **1,200mm**

Weight: **300kg** (including the user)

If your wheelchair exceeds the above dimensions, please contact our Passenger Assist team who will be able to offer advice.



## Our Northern Mobility Scooter Permit scheme

We know how important mobility scooters are for some of our customers, so we are happy to accommodate folding and Class 2 mobility scooters on our trains.

We can accept mobility scooters on board our trains as part of a scheme at 'mobility scooter friendly' stations for journeys on 20 specified routes and over 100 stations. For full details please see our Mobility Scooter Policy on our website: [northernrailway.co.uk/mobilityscooter](https://northernrailway.co.uk/mobilityscooter), pick up a leaflet from a staffed station or contact our Customer Experience Centre.

Stations vary considerably across our network. The gradient of the boarding ramp between platform and train at many stations presents a risk for customers and staff, while others have narrow platforms which means there is insufficient space to safely turn mobility scooters when the ramp between platform and train is extended. We need to take this into consideration, however Northern are committed to expanding our 'mobility scooter friendly stations' throughout 2021 and beyond.

## At the station

Northern manages 479 stations, and the facilities at these stations vary considerably across the network. Many of our stations are staffed, while some have staff presence for part of the day and the remainder have no station-based staff.

At larger stations, such as Leeds and Manchester Victoria, dedicated information points are located on the station concourse, with clear signage to their location within the station. The information points have variable height counters with information screens and leaflets positioned so that they can be accessed by everyone.

The meeting point at staffed stations is at the ticket office, this will be clearly identified, to help customers who have booked assistance to locate and meet our staff. We recommend you arrive at the station 20 minutes prior to the departure of your train. At staffed stations the meeting point is marked as ticket office.

If you have not booked assistance when you arrive at a station, please speak with a member of staff or at an unstaffed station, please proceed to the platform and attract the attention of the Conductor when the train arrives. Our conductors are trained to look for customers who may need assistance when arriving at a station.

When you have boarded a train, our station staff will communicate with the Conductor and destination station staff, where appropriate, to ensure you are provided with assistance to get off the train.

When a Northern train arrives at a station, our staff will ensure that customers who have booked through Passenger Assist are assisted off the train as soon as possible. At terminating stations, we aim to provide assistance to alight within five minutes of the train's arrival into the station.

When booking assistance, if your journey involves a station which does not have staff available at the time you are travelling, our Passenger Assist team will take this into account, together with the type of assistance you require and the overall accessibility of the station to ensure you can complete your journey. If our Passenger Assist team believes there is any risk of you not being provided with sufficient assistance at a particular station, they will discuss options with you and provide an alternative journey plan, assistance or transport to get you to your destination.

## Assistance with luggage

We recognise that luggage can be difficult to manage in the station environment for many disabled and older people. If you need your luggage carried, please tell us when you book assistance so we can ensure that station staff, where available, are ready to assist. Assistance can be given in taking customers and their luggage from train to station entrances (and vice versa) and when transferring between trains; wherever reasonably practicable.

Our staff must be able to lift luggage items safely, so please bear in mind the limits set out in the National Rail Conditions of Travel, which state that you may bring with you up to two large items and one small item.

## Step-Free Stations Map

Our step free station map is available through our website [northernrailway.co.uk/stepfreeaccess](https://northernrailway.co.uk/stepfreeaccess) or using the QR code



Alternatively, our customer experience team can help with any queries you may have.



## Station accessibility information

For information on whether the following accessible services and facilities are available at any station operated by Northern please see our website **[northernrailway.co.uk/stations](https://northernrailway.co.uk/stations)**:

- Level of platform accessibility and how access is provided (e.g. lifts, ramps or steps)
- Disabled Parking
- Accessible Set Down and Pick-Up Points
- Ticket office opening hours
- Meeting Points for assistance
- Staffing hours and Assistance availability
- Accessible Ticket machines
- Customer Information systems
- Help Points (either staffed or audio contact with our Customer Experience Centre)
- Accessible toilets (including National Key toilets)
- Induction Loops
- Tactile paving
- Station Wheelchair availability
- Accessible waterproof waiting facilities
- Catering facilities
- Secure Station Accreditation

We are making accessibility improvements through our Station Investment Fund at a number of our stations, including 25 Inclusive Hub stations which will offer step-free routes between the station entrance and platforms. At other locations we are installing platform 'humps' to reduce the stepping distance at stations with low platforms.

## On the train

An overview of each type of train used on Northern services is available on our website, [northernrailway.co.uk/trains](https://northernrailway.co.uk/trains), including information on the general accessibility of each type and details of the routes on which different types of train are scheduled to run.

Following significant investment by Northern in new and refurbished trains, the majority of Northern trains offer:

- Two wheelchair spaces
- At least one Accessible toilet
- A Boarding ramp
- Designated priority seating
- Aural information
- Visual information
- A Conductor to provide assistance during the journey on every train.

All our trains are fitted with public address systems, and our Conductors are trained to make clear and concise announcements giving train information, including details of the next station and will do so on all services that do not have pre-recorded announcements.

Conductors are also trained to take into account the needs of visually impaired, deaf or hearing-impaired people when walking through the train and providing information.

## **Seats on trains**

We currently do not offer seat reservations on any Northern service, and our Passenger Assist team will make this clear when booking assistance for you. However, our conductors will make every effort to assist older and disabled passengers find a seat on-board.

Priority seating, which has extra legroom and situated near the doors, is available on all of our new and refurbished trains. Priority seats are clearly labelled, and other passengers are requested to give up the seat, if required by an older or disabled person.

Wheelchair spaces are available on all of our trains, and our Conductors assist in ensuring these dedicated spaces are kept clear and wheelchair users are given priority for this space.

We also participate in a priority seating card scheme, which you can use to let our staff and other customers know that you require a seat. These cards are available from our Customer Experience Centre team and at staffed stations.

## Assistance dogs

Assistance dogs are welcome on all Northern trains, free of charge, and can travel in any part of the train. Our Conductors will be happy to ensure that you are in the most appropriate seating on board the train, to make the journey comfortable for both you and your dog.

## Ramps

Ramps are available on all our trains to facilitate boarding and alighting. The ramps are specifically designed to fit the train you are travelling on, so that customers with reduced mobility can safely move onto and off the trains.

Ramps are available for all customers who require assistance. If you have not booked assistance, please advise a member of station staff where available, or the Conductor who will arrange for the ramp to be put in place.

## If things do not go as planned

We try to do everything we can to avoid them, but sometimes delays or cancellations will happen.

We promise that if you are delayed, we will give you as much information as we can about what is happening.

If you have booked assistance in advance, where possible we will contact you to make alternative arrangements, particularly if there is significant disruption such as a severe weather event.

When a journey changes, or we experience disruption to services, we will provide information about changes to train times, and alternative travel arrangements, in both aural and visual formats by Public Address announcements and Information Screens displayed at stations and on our trains.

Where possible, for significant changes and disruption during a journey, conductors will pass through the train to check if customers require further support and provide assistance. Staff will always pass through the train to assist older and disabled passengers where a train is being taken terminated before its final destination.

Our Mobile App and website show live train times, and help points are available at many stations providing a link to our Customer Information team who are also be able to assist you in continuing your journey.

## **Alternative transport**

In the event we need to use alternative transport, we aim to use rail replacement buses or coaches which are accessible. We work with regular suppliers for rail replacement transport so that we can request accessible vehicles are provided during periods of disruption. However, this is sometimes more challenging when sourcing vehicles at short notice, particularly as the availability of accessible vehicles can be limited in some geographical areas.

## **If things go wrong**

Customers are at the heart of all that we do, and we work hard to ensure we deliver assistance in the right way for every journey. However, sometimes things go wrong, and we may not be able to provide the level of service that we promised.

Your feedback is important to us. So, if assistance has not been provided in the way you expected, whether you booked in advance or not, please contact our Customer Experience Centre and we will investigate why this happened, and what action we intend to take to ensure it does not happen again.

We understand the inconvenience caused when assistance is not delivered, so we will also provide you with appropriate redress for your journey.

## Where to get more information and how to get in touch

Our Accessible Travel Policy complements this leaflet and sets out in detail our policies and approach towards providing assistance for older and disabled customers; and how we meet our regulatory obligations. It is available on our website:

[northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel](https://northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel).

Alternative formats such as audio and large print versions of both this leaflet and our Accessible Travel Policy are available on request, by calling our Customer Experience Centre by phone or Text Relay, and on our website, free of charge. We aim to provide this to you within seven working days.

Information is important, so we will ensure that accessibility information relating to our stations and trains is readily available to you and is kept up-to-date. This is available in an online PDF format, available at: [northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel](https://northernrailway.co.uk/accessibletravel), which is accessible using screen readers or other software with accessibility features (for example, Adobe Reader) and can be easily accessed via personal mobile devices. We can also provide train station information by post on request, including in alternative formats such as large print.

## Contact Us

Our Customer Experience Centre can provide further information regarding our services, including any queries on the day. We would also be grateful to hear your feedback on services, and if you have suggestions or would like to get involved with improving accessibility.

We are available between 0600 and 2300 seven days a week when trains are running. We are closed on Christmas Day.

Phone: **0800 200 6060** (Freephone, including from mobiles)

Text Relay: **18001 0800 200 6060**

Email: [enquiries@northernrailway.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@northernrailway.co.uk)

Online: [northernrailway.co.uk/help](https://northernrailway.co.uk/help)

### How to contact us via Social Media:

Twitter: [@northernassist](https://twitter.com/northernassist)

Facebook: [@northernassist](https://facebook.com/northernassist)

Instagram: [@northernrailway](https://instagram.com/northernrailway)

We really hope you will not have any reason to complain when you are travelling with us. However, if you do, please speak to someone on the train or the station and they will try to sort out the problem there and then.

If you would rather, you can contact our Customer Experience Centre, or email us at [complaints@northernrailway.co.uk](mailto:complaints@northernrailway.co.uk). Please give us the opportunity to try to resolve your complaint. If you're unhappy with the final response you receive, you have the right to appeal to the Rail Ombudsman.

### **Rail Ombudsman**

Phone: **0330 094 0362**

Textphone: **0330 094 0363**

Email: [info@railombudsman.org](mailto:info@railombudsman.org)

By Post:

**FREEPOST – RAIL OMBUDSMAN**

Rolling stock class	No. of Carriages	No. designated wheelchair spaces	Accessible toilets Y/N	Boarding ramp Y/N	No. designated priority seats	Baby changing facilities Y/N	Passenger information (Aural/ Aural and Visual)	Train crew on train	Seat Reservation Y/N	Areas where these trains operate
150	2 or 3	2	Yes	Yes	17/38	Yes	A and V	Driver and conductor	No	Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Liverpool, West Yorkshire, North Lincs. South Yorkshire, Derbyshire
155	2	2	Yes	Yes	16	Yes	A and V	Driver and conductor	No	York, Leeds, Hull and Scarborough
156	2	2	Yes	Yes	16	Yes	A and V	Driver and conductor	No	North East, Cumbrian Coast, Lancs and Cumbria, Merseyside, Cheshire
158	2 or 3	2	Yes	Yes	16/24	Yes	A and V	Driver and conductor	No	South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Lancashire, Fylde, North Yorkshire, North East
170	3	2	Yes	Yes	22	Yes	A and V	Driver and conductor	No	Scarborough - Sheffield, Leeds - Knaresborough, York and Harrogate
195	2 or 3	2	Yes	Yes	14/26	Yes	A and V	Driver and conductor	No	Manchester - Derbyshire, Sheffield, Liverpool, Leeds and Barrow in Furness, York - Blackpool, Windermere, Chester - Leeds
319	4	2	Yes	Yes	32	Yes	A and V	Driver and conductor	No	Manchester - Crewe, Liverpool, Blackpool, Liverpool - Wigan, Blackpool, Crewe
323	3	2	Yes	Yes	36	Yes	A and V	Driver and conductor	No	Manchester - Hadfield, Stoke, Crewe, Liverpool - Crewe
331	3 or 4	2	Yes	Yes	26/38	Yes	A and V	Driver and conductor	No	Blackpool North - Hazel Grove, Liverpool, Leeds - Skipton, Bradford Forster Square, Doncaster, Ilkley, Bradford Forster Square - Skipton
333	4	2	Yes	Yes	32	Yes	A and V	Driver and conductor	No	Skipton - Bradford Forster Square, Leeds - Ilkley
769*	4	2	Yes	Yes	42	Yes	A and V	Driver and conductor	No	TBA
153**	1	1	No	Yes	0	No	Manual Conductor Announcements	Driver and conductor	No	Will be coupled to PRM Compliant rolling stock to strengthen capacity on the network and will not run on their own

